

The Department of

# Labor and Economic Opportunity

LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



## MIOSHA takes action to protect workers, extends emergency rules amid surge in COVID-19 cases

### *EMERGENCY RULES EXTENDED, OUTLINE WORKPLACE COVID-19 MITIGATION REQUIREMENTS*

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**LANSING, Mich.** - As broad community spread of COVID-19 continues, the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) within the Michigan Dept. of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) has extended its emergency rules, originally issued October 14, 2020, to protect Michigan workers, businesses, customers and communities from the spread of COVID-19. The emergency rules have been extended until October 14, 2021, but can be modified or withdrawn at any time in response to changes in COVID-19 spread.

"MIOSHA's emergency rules help keep us all safe by ensuring that employers implement common sense safety standards to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace," said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. "When employers maintain a safe workplace, that gives workers and consumers the confidence to keep our economy moving."

As cases across the state surge, the protection of workers is MIOSHA's top priority.

Since March 2020, employers have reported over 40 worker deaths from COVID-19 in Michigan and MIOSHA has received over 12,000 complaints from employees alleging COVID-19 hazards in the workplace. In addition, over 605 referrals were received from local government, including local health departments, indicating that businesses were not taking all the necessary measures to protect their employees from infection.

"As we work to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the rules reinforce the importance of keeping workplaces safe for employees from COVID-19 transmission," said COVID-19 Workplace Safety Director Sean Egan. "We want employers to create a safe work environment for their employees, which is why we will continue to work with employees and businesses to help them understand how to safely stay open."


To provide additional educational support to employers, the new **MIOSHA Ambassador Program** has provided over 3,700 businesses free education and one-on-one guidance to understand regulations on workplace safety. Ambassadors work directly with business owners and managers to implement safety directives to help ensure a safe workplace for employees and customers.

LEO remains engaged in robust conversations with civic, business and labor leaders as well as public health experts to develop a set of phased-in return-to-office recommendations. These recommendations will provide additional education and assistance to employers to help them implement the MIOSHA emergency rules and safely return to in-person work at an appropriate time.

According to data released Sept. 3 through April 1, as reported to Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) by local public health departments workplace outbreaks include 670 in manufacturing and construction, 250 in restaurants and bars, 374 in retail, 332 in office settings and 52 in personal care services. This data demonstrates the need for the rules extension and employer strategies that ensures the protection of hardworking Michiganders.

Under the emergency rules, businesses that resume in-person work must, among other things, have a written COVID-19 preparedness and response plan and provide thorough training to their employees that covers, at a minimum, workplace infection-control practices, the proper use of personal protection equipment (PPE), steps workers must take to notify the business or operation of any symptoms of COVID-19 or a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, and how to report unsafe working conditions.

"It's important to note that the emergency rules implement workplace safeguards for all Michigan businesses," MIOSHA director Bart Pickelman said. "The rules also include requirements for specific industries, including manufacturing, construction, retail, health care, exercise facilities, restaurants and bars."

Under the emergency rules, employers must continue to implement policies that require remote work for employees where remote work is feasible, to help ensure that COVID-19 transmission is mitigated to the maximum extent possible. While in-person work is permitted when remote work is not feasible, remote work is recommended as a strategy to minimize in-person contacts and is included in guidance from the CDC and Federal OSHA to protect employees in the workplace. 

The rules establish workplace safety requirements and employers should coordinate these requirements with the **MDHHS Emergency Order** restricting gathering sizes, requiring face coverings in public spaces and childcare facilities, placing capacity limitations on stores, bars and other public venues and providing safer workplaces.

Employers and employees with questions regarding workplace safety and health may contact MIOSHA using the new hotline at 855-SAFE-C19 (855-723-3219). To learn more about the efforts to support a safe reopening in Michigan, visit **[Michigan.gov/COVIDWorkplaceSafety](https://www.michigan.gov/COVIDWorkplaceSafety)**.



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